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Psychic Phenomena in the Witchcraft Cases

BY

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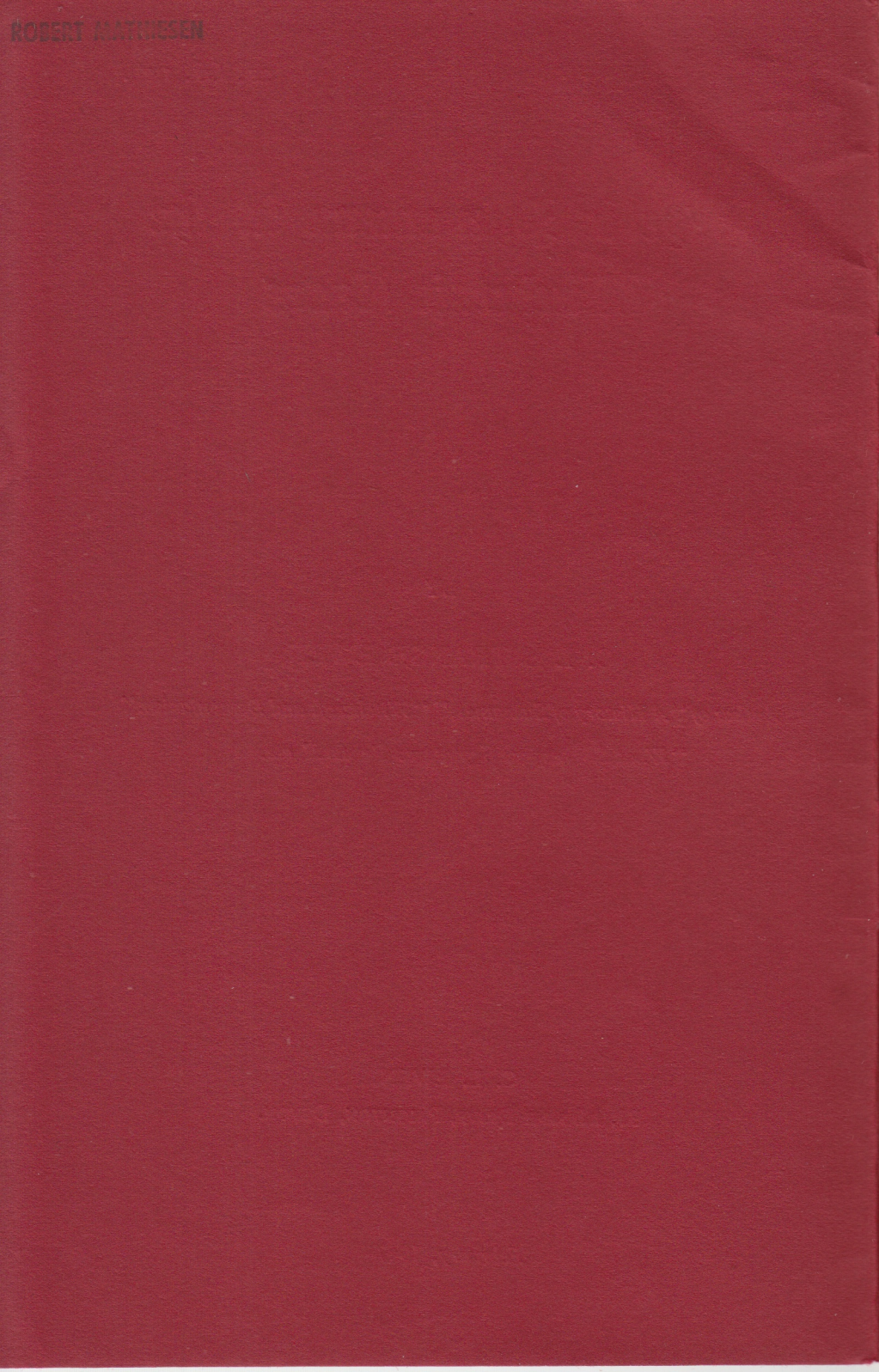
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Introductory. Throughout milleniums it has been observed that a minority of human beings has been blessed or cursed with supernormal powers, meaning those developed beyond the recognised range of our faculties. No one conjecture of the reason for this strange and unequal operative activity of endowments ordinarily latent, nor explanation of the inexplicable and puzzling phenomena resulting, has been found generally acceptable. Such singular talents range through healing, prevision, supersensory cognition, inspirational and trance writing and speech, projection of apparitions, materialisation, fire immunity, action at a distance by invisible means (telekinesis), levitation, and, most remarkable of all, the power of transmitting matter through matter. Illustrations of the working of such perplexing mysteries have become familiar through the agency of sacred history, which is replete with relations of psychic acts, the execution of such being the chief qualification necessary to sustain the role of prophet or apostle. Subject to various vicissitudes exploitation of divers of these accomplishments has continued from primaeval days to the present time in the practices of healers, dowsers, diviners, and spirit "mediums", but it is singular that having been the foundation of the great christian religions they have, in that service, since been displaced in favour of pseudo-mysteries.

Concurrently with the recognition of the exceptional feats specified was the extravagant belief that some persons succeeded further in acquiring supernatural powers, and such highly-flattered individuals became known as gods, saints, devils, wizards, witches, sorcerers, or necromancers, to conform with the prevailing doctrine of the Church dictators. In early days much confusion in understanding between the supernormal and the fanciful supernatural agencies undoubtedly reigned, limited knowledge of physics and psychic science leading to the first being mistaken for the second. Actually in our world there is nothing that could be called supernatural, although there are often noumena and phenomena not conforming to our existing knowledge of nature's sequences.

The object of the present paper is the limited one of determining whether persecution of "witches" as alleged controllers of forces imagined to be supernatural in origin, was magnified by both civil and ecclesiastical authority through want of recognition of actual supernormal functions.¹ The brightest periods of witchcraft trials were:

¹Books of spells and grimoires used by magicians of old in conjuration of spirits give no indication that any psychic faculties are necessary, and it seems that they relied rather on astrology and magical ceremony. In my books on witchcraft I concluded that no operation there recorded could not have been accomplished by normal means, and that nothing evidenced an agency regarded at the time as supernormal. I shall, however, now point out one or two acts which may have been what are commonly known as "psychic manifestations."

Continental, 1320-1679. Due to the savage and prolonged torture, the number of executions, particularly in German States, was colossal. No precise estimate has been made, but some enquirers do not stop at a million! Many details of accusations have been preserved. see H. C. Lea, *Materials towards a History of Witchcraft*, 1939. (Cited as "Lea").

England, 1560-1685. The present writer's computation of capital sentences from a study of indictments is under one thousand. (*Witch Hunting and Witch Trials*, 1929, p. 112). Cited as "W.H."

Scotland, 1590-1680. Dr. G. F. Black (*Witchcraft in Scotland*, 1938, p. 18) thinks that during this period there may have been 4,400 burnings.

American Colonies, 1692. Few executions except this one year when in New England 19 were hanged and one pressed. Several hundred imprisoned and accused. (G. L. Burr, *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases*, 1914, p. 373). Cited as "Burr."

During the outstanding activities of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the supernatural achievements ascribed to witches were not so much personal communion with disembodied souls or demons as those operations presumed to be accomplished by the aid of Satan or in his employment and covering metamorphosis, aerial veneration, a wide field of destruction and injury to life and property, sacrilege, sexual abominations, cannibalism, and demoniacal possession. With the eighteenth century legislators realising that there were neither witches nor evil spirits,¹ these prodigies, so far as they were believed to be influenced by devils, passed into history.

Psychic phenomena being wide-spread among primitive races, and classical authors having evidenced them as no more novel in the early centuries of the christian era than at the present day, inductive reasoning leads to the conclusion that such supernormal manifestations would be as prevalent during the years of witch persecutions. It promised, therefore, that in the official records of sorcery a wealth of incidents of psychic origin would be found, but it is remarkable that these copious narratives yield nothing like such representative examples as the Bible, or descriptions of philosophers as Porphyry (3 cent.) and Iamblichus (4 cent.) or the reports of manifestations of the séance-room as observed and attested by scientific men of a later age. Nevertheless, looking over the court process of past centuries, it can be inferred that not only did some of the earliest witches possess abnormal powers corresponding to those of the ancient shamans, prophets or oracular priestesses, and made familiar by the modern psychic, medium, or sensitive, as variously called, but so also did a number of their supposed victims.

¹There are yet, of course, people who believe in both. For instance, M. Summers, *A Popular History of Witchcraft*, 1937, p. 246: "Witches are as numerous, as malign and mischievous in England to-day, as ever they were in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," but it is significant that in *History of Witchcraft*, vii, he had expressed the Roman Catholic perversion identifying psychism with witchcraft rather than the reverse.

THE NATURE OF TRANCES

In both witch trials and the séance-room forms of trance are prominent, because supernormal manifestations are often dependent upon the cataleptic state, but the condition to be effective does not always reach unconsciousness. A trance is described by medical men as a derangement of the nervous system characterised by loss of sensation and muscular action, with differing effects on the operation of the intellect. While psychic students would not reject this physiological definition wholly, the phenomenon is generally regarded by them as being primarily psychological and a temporary vacation of the astral body (with soul).¹ A singular feature is that the catalepsy may continue through a more involved condition, which by spiritualists is commonly considered to be animation by an external and invading entity.

For a comparison of magical and psychic phenomena the various forms of temporary cessation of normal and familiar sensory and motor functions, besides being classed conveniently according to their method of generation, may be tentatively sub-divided into the following types which, however, are not clear-cut distinctions, but incline to merge into one another.

The natural state of unconsciousness (A) represented by (1) sleep. The artificial or induced state (B) divided into (2) anaesthetic, (3) narcotic, (4) magnetic,² and (5) hypnotic. Then of self-induced or spontaneous trances (C) there are (6) mediumistic, (7) mystic; and of the commonest affections of this nature symptomatic of malady (D) will be recognised (8) syncope (the common faint), and (9) catalepsy as found in hysteria, epilepsy and other pathological conditions. (10), the witches' trance, possibly compounds the features of several (see below, p.5). A few outstanding features of these ten states of unconsciousness may be noticed briefly.

(A1) Sleep, called by the Arabians "death's brother", has been valued as the means of divine revelations notwithstanding the observation of the apocalyptist, Ben Sira: "dreams lift up fools" (*Ecclus.* xxxiv,1). It is also regarded as an occasion for travelling by the soul, spirit, or astral body, as variously termed. Other enquirers deny the possibility of trance during sleep.

(B2) The state of unconsciousness and insensibility to pain produced artificially by a dentist or anaesthetist is familiar to everyone, and it is worthy of note by the psychic student because in some cases the induced coma renders the patient clairvoyant.

(B3) A form of artificial trance follows upon an effort to prompt abnormal cognition clairvoyantly and telepathically by taking hashish, opium, flybane (Siberia), kava (Polynesia), soma (India), peyotl (S. America), ayahuasca (Central America) and other nar-

¹One spiritualist dissentient is S. Desmond, *We do not Die*, 1934, p. 95: "Trance is not the vacating of the body by the soul."

²Magnetic is really natural psychism (6) but the term is often synonymous with hypnotic (5).

cotics. Also by prayer, music, dancing, fasting, and other strange provocations.

(B4 & 5) A gifted operator practising either magnetism or hypnotism is also able to occasion a condition of deep slumber in many human beings, but of such technique there is little or nothing traceable in the witchcraft relations¹. It may be, however, that long before the days of Mesmer (1735-1815), such manipulations were not unknown, since John of Salisbury, writing in 1189, refers to "sending to sleep."² An Arabian treatise of the 12th century lists a "confection" to create "sleep like unto death,"³ and in England in or before the thirteenth century it was made a felony to "send people to sleep," but that may have been no more than a check on the administration of soporific drugs.⁴ The magnetic sleep is recognised by most practitioners as distinct from the hypnotic sleep, one ground being that, quite apart from the possible existence of fluid energy, only with the former are there psychic manifestations, and only with the latter, anaesthesia or analgesia. The difference is not always evident⁵.

(c6) Of the self-induced or spontaneous trances there is that into which the psychic or medium "throws himself" or falls naturally, and resembles the magnetic variety (4) in so far that supernormal manifestations are produced, but it also follows the hypnotic (5) since anaesthesia and analgesia may result. Memory of experiences is not a usual feature of any one of these three trances, but numerous exceptions have been reported.⁶

A marked distinction between the hypnotic subject *en rapport* with the operator and the entranced medium (*en rapport* with *x*?) is that the former often has an extraordinary accurate sense of time elapsed, whereas the latter (or as some say, the "spirit in control") finds difficulty in considering it at all. Wide differences of opinion exist as to whether an entranced medium is an hysteric⁷.

¹F. W. H. Myers (*Human Personality*, i, 636) thought that hypnotic suggestion "was probably often used by witches." Certainly they suggested ailments.

²*Polycraticus*, i, 10; Migne CXIV, 406.

³*Picatrix*, per L. Thorndyke, *History of Magic*, 1923, ii, 821.

⁴*W.H.*, 6.

⁵Difficulties of the subject have resulted in a vast library on hypnotism, but few authors agree entirely.

⁶Prof. Wm. James, a professor of psychology at Harvard University, carried out some experiments with Mrs. Piper to determine what the mediumistic trance had in keeping with the hypnotic trance. He does not appear to have placed his sensitive under deep hypnosis and was unable to influence her to remember her sayings in mediumistic trance, whereas the subject of a hypnotic trance will often accept such a suggestion. (J. M. Bramwell, *Hypnotism*, 1906, pp. 100f, 150 ff).

⁷Dr. J. Maxwell (*Metapsychical Phenomena*, transl. L. I. Finch, 1905, p. 44) found "neither hysteria, nor neurasthenia, nor any nervous affection whatsoever, but a state of the nervous system such as appears in hypertension." Sir W. F. Barrett (*On the Threshold of the Unseen*), 1917, p. 123), on the contrary, observes that "Dr. Hyslop and many other psychiatrists have shown, an entranced medium is not in a normal condition, but shows evidence of hysteria." Most hypnotists, as Moll, Braid, and Bramwell, report that hysterical subjects are the most difficult to influence, but there are occasional dissentients.

(C7) A type of the self-induced or spontaneous trance is the mystic, particularly favoured by the religious of early days to become noticeably rife among the inmates of convents and monasteries. Arising generally from lowered vitality in combination with fervid spirituality, it is brought about by concentrating on one idea or emotion until everything else is exorcised from the mind. This mental affliction differs from those soporific conditions already noted in that the train of thought present during the seizure is remembered afterwards. It ranges from a light form called enthusiasm to an ecstasy or frenzy. It might also be classed as a form of hysteria and is apt to become epidemic.

(D8) Syncope or fainting may or may not be an indication of disease and does not call for consideration here.

(D9) The trance as a manifestation of disorder may occasion no more inconvenience than a faint, and is a familiar symptom of hysteria and epilepsy. While having much in parallel with the other forms of catalepsy noticed, hysteric and epileptic stupors have not entirely the same character. These are the trances most usually associated with allegations of acts of witchcraft, but it seems possible that some of the comas exemplified in such instances may have been of the self-induced types (6, 7).

(E10) *The Witches' Trance*. On the Continent, in a number of recorded cases¹, careful watching of women proposing to attend a witch-meeting showed that, having anointed themselves, they, instead of leaving their homes, fell into a deep slumber, "cold as a corpse" and as insensible to blows and application of fire, and, after a few hours, to awaken well and merry, to describe their lewd adventures". The general explanation was that the stupefaction caused by the unction had given them the sensation of flying through the air and indulging in the devilish lusts of the sabbats. Of what nature were these trances? The eminent contemporary, Francis Bacon, in attempting an answer, is neither scientific nor satisfying.² Coming to later times De Quincey's positive experience with opium is well known. Prof. T. Laycock, a mental physiologist, found by personal experiment that one drop of Fleming's tincture of aconite aroused a "novel state of perception in which the rattle of a passing train shaped at last into strains of grand aerial music in cadences of exquisite harmony."³ Dr. Ludwig Mejer asserts that "the witches intoxicated themselves with a decoction of stramonium (i.e., "nightshade") causing visions and dreams so impressive that when sober they believed them to be real".⁴ But

¹Lea (from 15th cent. and later writers), i, 190f, 260f, 271, etc.

²In our own time S. Muldoon (*Projection of the Astral Body*, 1929, p. 183) asserts that when his astral body is about to be projected his body becomes cold, and his arms and limbs numb.

³His view is that "ointments laid on thick, by stopping of the pores shut in the vapours and send them to the head extremely." (*Sylva Sykvarum*, 1841 ed., p. 125, per Lea, iii, 1355).

⁴*Mind and Brain*, 1869, 2 ed. i, 422, per Dr. W. Carpenter (*Principles of Mental Physiology*, 1916 (7 ed.), p. 643f).

⁵*Die Periode der Hexenprocesse*, 1882, p. 10f. Lea (iii, 1076) stigmatises his view as "folly."

contrarily, Dr. Otto Snell, having experimented on himself with aconitine (*i.e.* wolf's bane) and fat and internal doses of belladonna, stramonium and a solution of sulphate of atropia (all "nightshade") rejected the soporific and hallucinatory powers of the ointment. Can it be then that the narcotic unguents of the witch had little or no effect, and that the real condition was trance (6) or enthusiasm (7)? It has long been known that by narcosis susceptibility to hypnotic sleep is increased,² and it may be that the drugs taken inwardly, as well as applied outwardly, facilitated the trance as do hemp taken internally or smoked, and chloroform inhaled,³ but experiment has shown that there are persons who, without stupeficients or ointments, can "hypnotise" themselves and that any desired delusion can be produced by self-suggestion.⁴ The functioning of such a faculty would amply explain the illusion of witches flying to a sabbat.⁵

The disregard of anaesthetics by "witches" is well illustrated in the cases of Catherine Delort of Toulouse (14th cent.), who fell into an extraordinary sleep every Saturday, nothing being said of anodynes, and so was carried to assemblies far away, and Anne-Marie de Georgel, who ascribed her transportations to the "mere effect of her will."⁶ These two women, five centuries later, would have ranked as mediums.⁷ At Nantes, in 1549, seven *magi* having undertaken to tell what happened within a circuit of ten miles, without drugging, at once fell senseless, and after lying so for three hours related occurrences in the vicinity, which were verified. All seven clairvoyants suffered death by fire.⁸

President Turettanus related to Bodin an instance he had observed in Dauphiny, where a servant-girl was discovered by her master and mistress lying insensible before the fire. Failing to awaken her by severe beating and applying hot coals to the most sensitive parts of her body, they left her for dead! In the morning they found her in bed, when she said: "Master, how you beat me." That she knew what happened although unconscious aroused sus-

¹*Hexenprozess und Geistesstörung*, München, 1891, pp. 68ff, 81, per Lea, ii, 914f.

²For some instances, Myers, *op. cit.*, i, 440ff.

³Bramwell, *op. cit.*, 44.

⁴Myers, *op. cit.*, i, 444ff., citing views of Dr. H. Wingfield on *The Connection of Hypnotism with the Subjective Phenomena of Spiritualism*. Dr. Bramwell thought previous hypnotism by another necessary, but Dr. W. B. Fahnstock, in 1871, had maintained otherwise.

⁵Carrington (S. Muldoon, *op. cit.* 71) says you may "keep conscious control of yourself up to the moment you fall asleep. . . then, as you are falling to sleep hold the scene before you, and at the very last moment—before you fall asleep—consciously transfer yourself into the scene," etc. Might not the witches do something similar in inducing their trances?

⁶Lamothe-Langon, *Histoire de l'Inquisition en France*, III, 235f., per Lea, i, 231f.

⁷In later days the visionary Swedenborg claimed that in the spirit he had been led into the heavens of which he gives a voluminous description. Doubtless his state of mind was much that of the witches.

⁸Jean Bodin *De Magorum Daemonomania*, 1579. p. 177, per Lea, ii, 360.

picion of witchcraft, and court proceedings following she was burnt at the stake.¹ This last instance may have been a manifestation of hysteria and type 9.

Giving consideration to details of narratives such as these it can only be concluded that physiologically the witches' and mediums' trances have much in common.² Both forms of self-induced catalepsy may exhibit loss of heat, muscular rigidity, anaesthesia and analgesia.³ The most pronounced difference between the two is that in trance some mediums have been known to produce astounding supernormal manifestations of which nature nothing has been recorded by the watchers over witches. Another important distinction is that whereas the witches on recovering consciousness remember their supposed visions, mediums recall nothing of their experiences, although this rule is not absolute.⁴

Trances with plasm. Further relations touching fifteenth-century witches describe what may have been the mediumistic trance more complete with the exudation of ectoplasm.⁵ *The Malleus Maleficarum* (Hammer of Witches), 1489 and many later editions, a text-book for both ecclesiastical and secular judges, which had such an immense influence in extending the persecution not only by catholics, but also by protestants, enters into some detail.⁶ A woman of Breisach says that when witches are curiously inclined, but do not wish to attend a sabbat personally, they lie down to sleep on their left side, after invoking all the demons, whereupon a sort of bluish vapour issues from the mouth through which they can see what is happening.⁷ The amorphous exhalation here noticed may be a gaseous variant of the plastic substance now

¹*Ibid.*, 176.

²In a letter to the London Dialectical Society (*Report*, 1871, p. 356) J. Burns of London related that his wife, with Mrs. Everitt and Mr. Cogman, following upon their return to consciousness, each gave the same testimony as to their spiritual experience in walking and conversing together. Clairvoyance, or detachment of the etheric body, or whatever the reason, should also be the explanation of the witches' tales of visiting a sabbat.

³A singular identification of witches with mediums can be established by the claim of Margaret Atkin of Balweary to detect the former (several of whom were burnt about 1597) by marks in the eye, (J. Spottiswoode, *Church of Scotland*, 1655 (ed. 1851), iii, 66f.) and the modern discovery of Dr. J. Maxwell that the latter have curious spots, even letters, on the iris. (*Encycl. Psychic Science*, Fodor, 1936, p. 233; hereinafter *E.P.S.*).

⁴See above, page 4.

⁵It is to be gathered that formerly ectoplasm was thought to be the soul. Cf. the story of Gunthram, king of Burgundy (6th cent.), whose "soul" was seen to issue from his mouth *in modum reptilis*. Dr. W. J. Crawford's observation (7 June 1920) confirms: "The plasma appears to wriggle up (legs) with the sinuous movements of a serpent." (E. E. Fournier d'Albe, *The Goligher Circle*, 68).

⁶Pt. II, q.1., c.3.

⁷Sylvester Priierias, an Italian, with some experience in conducting trials, but who derived much information from the *Malleus*, has expanded this into the "left side of husband," and he also tells of the bluish vapour (De *Strigimagarum Daemonumque Mirandis*, Rome, 1521; ed. 1575, ii,

variously known to psychic students as ectoplasm, teleplasm, cryptoplasm, protoplasm, or psychoplasm.

The solid variety of ectoplasm issues from the sides, fingers, or natural orifices, and is usually white, but has been described as grey, black, or even "red-sticky matter."¹ Dr Kafka, who made a microscopic examination of a sample, reported that it had the typical structure of an albuminous liquid filled with cells, with or without nuclei (epithelium) . . . and also fat globules."² The reality of this strange exudation is, of course, strongly disputed by the disbelievers in supernormal manifestations, but, since it is vouched for by a number of scientists, the phenomenon noticed by the compilers of the *Malleus* may well have had some foundation in fact.

Trance under Torture. It may be that the self-induced trance, a state in which insensibility to pain prevails, also had its use in the torture chamber, for from time to time unfortunate women, who underwent the revolting and excruciating torments of the Continental jurists, are said to have "slept." There are numerous accounts pointing to the "slumber" having been most profound, but one suspects a terrible awakening.³ The *Malleus*⁴ may be referring to something of the sort when asserting that, by the devil's help, some

1, per Lea, i, 359). A later writer, De Lancre, conseiller du Roy, perhaps deriving from the same source, says that the witches exhale a thick vapour which serves as a mirror (Gorres, *La Mystique divine*, Paris, 1836, p. 161, per Lea, iii, 1503). Benedict Carpozoy (*Practica Rerum Criminalium*, Wittenberg, 1670, p. 315, per Lea, ii, 840) makes this vapour "whitish." A lady at Dammartin, 1552, said to be tied up without visible action, claimed to see a "white cloud" when "the spirit approached her" (*Sylvula Mirabilium Historiarum*, per Henning Grosse, 1597, p. 113; Lea, ii, 632). Cf. the experience of Mrs. C. L. Tweedale (*Man's Survival after Death*, 4 ed. 1931, p. 237) with the "tall column of white cloudy light." Swedenborg, in a vision of April 1745, "conversing with an angel," saw a "watery vapour exuding from the pores of the body, which being collected, was changed into little worms." A fiery light was in this vapour (*Spiritual Diary*, ed. G. Bush, no. 397). Cf. Vapour ascending from people holding a séance and the medium's body full of light with sparks flying out (*Clairvoyance of Bessie Williams*, 1893, p. 146).

¹V. N. Turvey, *The Beginnings of Seership*, 1911, p. 54f.

²A. von Schrenck-Notzing, *Phenomena of Materialisation*, ed. d'Albe, 1920, p. 202f, 248. Dr. W. J. Crawford (*Experiments in Psychical Science*, 1919, p. 113) reports that passing the hand the "psychic matter" (ectoplasm) feels "cold and spore-like." But there is a second and unstable component which blends with it (*The Psychic Structures*, 1921, p. 20). A later writer, Dr. E. F. Bowers (*The Phenomena of the Science Room*, n.d., p. 60) also refers to a gas, but he had read Crawford's books (180) and may have been inspired. Photographs are published in the works of Schrenck-Notzing, Crawford, Dr. Geley, Dr. Fournier d'Albe and others.

³There are, of course, some people who feel no pain whatsoever, but this does not usually preserve them from lesion and death. Dr. W. Carpenter (*op. cit.*, p. 172) notes the case of a man who slept while a foot was, by lime, completely charred to a "cinder-like fragment." He died in hospital. (Testified by a senior surgeon of Bristol Infirmary). On fire immunity see below, p. 13.

⁴III, q. 13. (ed. Summers, 223).

witches are "so insensible to the pains of torture that they will sooner be torn limb from limb than confess any of the truth."

A case is cited by W. H. Brückner where a man laughed throughout all grades of torture and, upon discharge, explained that his only annoyance had been the pastor exhorting him to repent.¹ Geiler von Kayserberg, in a Lenten sermon delivered in the cathedral of Strassburg in 1508, with typical clerical disregard for reason, expands in declaring that when women torn with hot pincers feel nothing, it is because the devil so inflames them internally that they are insensible to outward heat.² Another view was expressed by Nicolaus Brandt of Lubeck, in a thesis for a doctorate in 1662, when observing that "patients" will go to sleep during torture, and slumber as peacefully as in bed, he quoted earlier beliefs that the anaesthesia could be produced by the recitation of verses and psalms,³ a familiar practice at the modern séance, where mediums find music and hymn-singing helpful in setting up rhythmic vibrations believed to influence trance and increase power.

The original *Inquisitiones-Acta von dem Laster der Zaubery*⁴ record that Chatrina Blanckenstein (of Altendorf?), on 9 June, 1676, after being stripped and suffering much agony with rack, thumbscrew, cords, and boot, "was stretched on the ladder and at once fell asleep, till the torturer called to her so much that she awoke; she did not shriek, but spoke low and again fell asleep; then the torturer burnt sulphur under her nose and she spoke again softly as people do in their sleep . . . She refused to answer and went to sleep again for fully a quarter of an hour, snoring softly like a man in a deep sleep . . . The torturer said that all arch-witches slept like other criminals could not⁵ . . . so he tried scraping between the legs with hair-cords, but she did not confess and after two hours was taken from the ladder.⁶ The goaler evidently regarded this stupor as something not found with ordinary offenders, but the contrary view is expressed by Johan Schack of Jena,⁷ who declares that somnolence occurs with thieves and homicides when tortured and "most of the alleged witches are women of disturbed brain and it is no wonder if, through the squalor of goal, mental suffering, intense agony and exhaustion of body, they fall into ecstasy as though into profound sleep."

Johann Friedrich Corvinus, in a learned dissertation for the doctorate of medicine in the University of Halle, 1725, referring to

¹*Commentatio de Magicis Personis et Artibus*, Jena, 1712, per Lea, iii, 1419.

²J. Hansen, *Quellen* . . . Bonn, 1907, p. 284ff, per Lea, i, 368.

³Lea, ii, 878f.

⁴Edited by Johann Reiche, Halle, 1703.

⁵This statement points to a considerable number of psychics having passed through his hands and would be most valuable if it could be corroborated.

⁶Lea, iii, 1245f.

⁷*Disputatio Juridica Ordinaria de Probatione Criminis Magiae*, Greifswald, 1706, p. 51, per Lea, iii, 1424.

the *somnum daemoniacum* ascribes it in part to the "stupefying effect of intense suffering" and, in part, to the help of the devil.¹ While the loss of consciousness in many cases of torture would undoubtedly be due to failure of the action of the heart, consideration of the above citations leads to the opinion that, in other instances, the insensibility may be attributed to spontaneous trance of the psychic.²

Trances of witches' victims. In England, there being no sabbat and no official torture of witches, nothing of their trances appears in court process now available, but our records provide several examples of persons surmised to be bewitched, who among their symptoms of malady included catalepsy. In general, this disorder was found among sufferers from what the sceptic would diagnose as hysteria and epilepsy, but who were popularly thought to be victims of a witch and possessed by one or more devils acting under her command. It seems possible that some of these trances were also generated spontaneously and independently of malady, although co-existent. The somnolism is of considerable interest as it introduces features corresponding to those of the séance-room medium although by no means under the conditions so often demanded at those gatherings such as darkness, vocalisation, and sympathetic sitters. In considering these exhibitions more particularly it will be convenient to take witches, victims, and mediums together. Subject to occasional overlapping, the phenomena may be divided into physical and mental (or psychical), but from some points of view all are mental.

PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS

In this class there are first those changes which take place in the body of the entranced, and secondly, certain automatic and visible external actions.

Rigor. Muscular stiffness is a characteristic prominent in mental disorders such as hysteria and epilepsy so often wrongly diagnosed as ailments caused by witchcraft. For instance, the unyielding body of Mary Glover in 1602, whom Sir Edmund Anderson, Kt., L.C.J., declared to be bewitched, and whose case in support was most carefully written up by Dr. Stephen Bradwell, in opposition to Dr. Edward Jorden, an advanced physician, who witnessed that the malady was hysteria. Elizabeth Jackson, charged with this crime, suffered one year's imprisonment.³ Another supposed demoniac, Anne Gunter, who had the honour of appearing three times before James I, and received attention not only from the most eminent doctors of medicine in Oxford, but also, by royal command, Dr. Jorden, had extraordinary stiffness in her fits.⁴

¹P. 36, per Lea, iii, 1483.

²It is claimed that Edward H. Morell confined in a strait-jacket for 48 hours without suffering had projected himself in his astral body. (B. M. L. Ernst, *Houdini and Conan Doyle*, 1933, p. 142).

³Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonism*, 1933, p. 133 (hereinafter *W & D.*)

⁴Ewen, *Witchcraft in the Star Chamber*, 1938, pp. 28ff (hereinafter *W.S.C.*).

Joan Harvey of Hockham in 1600, suspected to be bewitched by Margaret Francis (who died in Norwich gaol), "became inflexible"¹ and people could not bend the arms or legs of the boy, Richard Jones of Shepton Mallet, for whose "bewitchment" Jane Brooks was condemned and executed at Chard Assizes on 26 March 1658.² Numerous recent examples of this nature could be cited,³ but the cause may be more than stiffening of the body, for instance, the Italian medium, Eusapia Paladino, has been seen in the cataleptic state with her head only resting on the table and her body being entirely without visible support for five minutes.⁴ In the modern events both hypnotic and spontaneous trances are represented.

Loss of weight. This peculiarity is often more apparent than real being due to the rigid bowing of the body found in hysterio-epilepsy, as in tetanus, which gave the impression of a reduction of gravity in the energumens, Mary Glover, Anne Gunter, and Richard Dugdale of Whalley (known and written about as the "Surey Demoniac"). Supported only on heels and occiput anyone trying to lift one from a bed by placing hands under the back might suppose weight to have been lost. Coming, however, to later times we meet with authenticated illustrations. Col. Rochas, the French psychical investigator, has noticed on the authority of three eye-witnesses, an ecstatic of Grenoble, whose body became stiff and "so light that it was possible to lift her up like a feather by holding her by the elbow."⁵ Moreover, it is recorded that the "Seeress of Prevorst" (Frederica Hauffe, 1801-29), if put into a bath during a trance, floated on the top of the water like a cork.⁶ It may have been some ancient experiment of this nature which led to the belief that a witch could not sink, and to the popular ordeal of swimming which disgraced this country until comparatively recent times. Another old test of witchcraft, that of balancing against the bible, doubtless also derived from diminished gravity of a psychic imagined to be a collaborator with demons.

¹W. & D. cited, 191.

²J. Glanvill, *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, 4 ed., 1726, p. 288f.

³A useful parallel is given by Dr. E. F. Bowers, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁴P. Joire, *Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena*, transl. D. Wright, 1916, p. 452. This feat took place in gaslight and is well attested, and apparently it is in the same class as levitation (see below).

⁵E.P.S. 201.

⁶J. Kerner, *Die Seherin von Prevorst*, transl. C. Crowe, 1845, p. 65f. Prof. Charles Richet (*Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, transl. De Brath, 1923, p. 548) comments: "It is a pity that such stuff should be mingled with serious enquiries; they detract from them." Yet such is merely levitation. A number of instances have been observed in the séance rooms particularly during production of phenomena. Sir W. Crookes found that when a form materialised, his psychic lost half her weight. Dr. W. J. Crawford, a scientist, who carried out experiments in Belfast, 1914-20, claimed that during a séance his medium became lighter by upwards of 50 lbs., the ascertained weight of matter abstracted from her body, p. 74ff. Other attested examples demonstrate that a human being may lose a large proportion of weight in a few hours, if it be transferred to another body.

Increase of weight occasionally noticed with demoniacs does not rest on convincing testimony,¹ but there is no reason to doubt the recorders, similar peculiarity having been observed in later mediumistic circles. It is well authenticated that one Alberto Fontana at Rome in 1893, after a levitation, remained for a time as if welded to the floor, those present being unable to move him.² Goulart notices a female "demoniac," who swelled and became so heavy that eight men could not raise her.³

Dilation. Alteration of bodily bulk, not necessarily weight, has received more notice. Both Vergil and Ovid (1 cent. B.C.) have referred to the distension of psychics.⁴ In the fourth century the celebrated Roman philosopher, Iamblichus, in a description of mediumistic trance, declared that the inspired person may be increased in girth or the reverse.⁵ One of these expansive sufferers among ecstasies has been chronicled in Sister Jeanne des Anges, superior of the Ursuline Convent at Loudon, 1633.⁶ As for the witch, a tractate of 1652 records that at the Assize Court at Maidstone, Anne Ashby (afterwards hanged) falling into an ecstasy "swelled into a monstrous and vast bigness . . . screeching and crying out."⁷ A nineteenth-century parallel figures in the Great Amherst (Nova Scotia) mystery (1878-9), the body of Esther Cox, a poltergeist victim, puffing out to an enormous size during which she screamed in agony.⁸

Elongation. Change of height, so far as evidence carries us, is not well established until our own times. Only one witness testified to William Sommers' body (1597) "extending to the height of the tallest man."⁹ Professor Chiaia of Naples reported to Professor Lombroso that the medium, Eusapia Palladino, whose phenomena were subjected to prolonged investigation by scientists, could increase her stature four inches. There is ample testimony that D. D. Home, a sensitive of considerable renown, could alter his height to a greater degree. On one occasion Lord Adare measured an increase from 5ft. 8in. to 6ft. 5½in.¹⁰

Strength. Phenomenal vigour exhibited by the so-called demoniacs has been recorded¹¹ and there seems no reason to doubt the informants, since a marked increase of muscular power in hypnotic subjects has followed upon suggestion.¹²

¹See the case of Joan Harvey (*W. & D.* cited, 191) and Mary Glover (*Ibid.*, 95, 197) the evidence being sworn in the Sessions House before the gullible Lord Chief Justice, Sir Edmund Anderson.

²P. Joire, *op. cit.*, 440f.

³*Encycl. of Occultism* (L. Spence, 1920), s.v. Obsession.

⁴*Æneid*, vi, 46ff, 77ff. *Fasti*, vi, 537.

⁵*De Mysteriis*, iii, 5. ⁶M. Summers, *Geography*, 415.

⁷*W. & D.* cited, 322. ⁸W. Hubbell, per *E.P.S.* 292.

⁹*W. & D.* cited, 101.

¹⁰*Experiences in Spiritualism*, 1869. See C. Richet, *op. cit.*, 486. Mr. H. D. Jencken, a barrister, testified to both elongation and shortening being witnessed by at least fifty people (*Report of London Dialectical Society*, 1871, p. 119).

¹¹*W. & D.* cited, 94.

¹²Bramwell, *op. cit.*, 75.

Frigidity. Regarding bodily temperature Pedro Ciruelo, an inquisitor in Saragossa in the early sixteenth century, has noticed that *xorguinas* (witches) "fall as dead and cold."¹ Comparison may be made with the condition of William Sommers for which one Alice Freeman was arraigned for witchcraft at Nottingham Lent Assizes, 1598. Probably suffering from hystero-epilepsy it is said of the young man that "in his fits his pulses and temples did not beat, he lay for dead, cold as ice."² It is familiar experience that working psychics lose heat,³ and that the circulation of the blood has been retarded is indicated by the much lower pulse-rate. For example, the medium F. F. Cradock's frequency, as taken by a physician at Pinner, was found to be only forty beats per minute, that is, little more than half normal.⁴

Fire Immunity. As observed above (pp. 6, 8f) several of the suspected witches are recorded as having had applications of fire without distress, but analgesia is no reason for concluding that they escaped unscathed. So also it is found that some of the apparent demoniacs, who likewise featured trances, were exempt from pain, but not lesion. The young girl, Mary Glover (1602), showed no sensibility, notwithstanding that Mr. Recorder and other enquiring gentlemen held a lighted candle to her hand until it blistered.⁵ Anne Gunter, cruelly examined, took no notice of the application of pins and firebrands.⁶ Much more remarkable is the gift of repelling heat. It is reported of the celebrated Simon Magus of Samaria (1st cent.) who, it is believed, perished in giving a public exhibition of levitation, that he revelled in fire without pain or injury, but his immunity is not unique.⁷ Catherine of Siena (14th cent.) on one occasion in trance, is said to have fallen upon her face in the burning coals, without being harmed. A parallel instance comes from Nottingham in 1598, three persons testifying that the bewitched William Sommers being in a fit and "cast into the fire received no hurt."⁸

Turning to the nineteenth century it is substantiated that the prominent medium, D. D. Home, also possessed freedom from burning, and has been seen to put his face in the fire,⁹ lift live coals with his bare hands or even place them in his shirt,¹⁰ and he could

¹Lea, i, 413.

²W. & D. cited, 101.

³See for instance H. Garland, *Forty Years of Psychic Research*, n.d., 238; H. Price, *Stella C.*, 1925, p. 32ff; H. D. Bradley, *The Wisdom of the Gods*, 1925, p. 74.

⁴Usborne Moore, *Glimpses of the Next State*, 1911, p. 72. To encourage projection of the astral body the heart-beat is slowed voluntarily to 42 pulsations per minute by S. Muldoon (*op. cit.*, 145ff).

⁵W. & D. cited, 197.

⁶W.S.C., p. 31.

⁷There is no reason to suspect trickery, although methods of applying juices of protective herbs were known. (*Malleus*, 1489, pt. III, q. xvii).

⁸W. & D. cited, 101. P. F. Mathieu in *Histoire des Miracles*, has other remarkable cases of fire immunity.

⁹Paper by H. D. Jencken, cited, p. 119.

¹⁰A feat denied by the wise Solomon (*Prov.* vi, 27).

also transmit his power to persons in the company¹ Similar exemption from pain and injury has resulted from suggestion by hypnotists.²

Stigmatisation. The production of stigmata is an impressive technique favoured by both immature saints and practising mediums,³ but except under strict control proves nothing, because such marks can be caused to appear artificially. Anne Gunter, 1604, the hysteric noticed above, developed strange circular blemishes on her hands⁴ and Elizabeth Hill, 1665, on whose flesh rose red spots "in which holes did appear" sometimes with "small blacks like thorns" has been dismissed by the present writer elsewhere as "fleas and their trade-marks."⁵ However, favourable comparison may be made with the modern case of Eleonore Zugun in whose flesh pins, needles, etc., would be stuck, even when under close observation at the National Laboratory of Psychical Research.⁶

KINETIC MANIFESTATIONS

Acoustics. Externalisation of motivity is a subject of special interest because the supernormal character of the extraordinary actions is so obvious, even if the cause is obscure. Mysterious sounds of percussion have been anciently recorded and variously ascribed to devils, witches, their victims, and mediums. A chronicle of Fulda Abbey in the diocese of Mainz, under date 858, refers to the interchange of raps with invisible entities or poltergeists, but no code had been devised.⁷ That the practicability of such a method for interrogating spirits was recognised in 1534 is clear from an event at Orleans where the friars, considering the remuneration received from the Praetor for attendance at the funeral of his wife as insufficient, plotted impersonation of a spirit proclaiming her damnation. A novice, having been introduced secretly above the "testudo" of the church, made appropriate noises during prayers, and to questions addressed, replied "by knocking," as he afterwards confessed.⁸ Whether or not the story is true it is evidence

¹Adare, *op. cit.* The *New York Times*, 25 Aug. 1929, reports the clothing of a young negress in Antigua repeatedly destroyed by fire when in the street, but she was neither injured nor felt the flames.

²Delbeouf's experiment (Bramwell, *op. cit.*, 84).

³There have been recorded hundreds of cases of stigmata developed by ascetics, some bearing remarkable correspondence to the supposed bleeding wounds of the crucified Jesus. Thereon Prof. Gustave Geley (*From the Unconscious to the Conscious*, transl. De Brath, 1920, p. 70) observes: "The phenomena of stigmatisation and affections of the skin effected by suggestion or auto-suggestion are but elementary ideoplastic effects much more simple than materialisations, though of the same order."

⁴W.S.C., 29.

⁵W. & D. cited, 139.

⁶*Proc.*, vol. i, 1927-9. Cf. also the bleeding punctures on the hand of the Berlin medium, Frau Vollhardt (J. M. Bird, *My Psychic Adventures*, 1923, p. 237).

⁷Migne, CLX, 163, per Lea, i, 100.

⁸Johann Weyer, *De Praestigis Daemonum et Incantationibus ac Veneficiis*, Basle, 1568, v, c.23, per Lea, ii, 519. A full account was used in 1584 by R. Scot (*The Discoverie of Witchcraft*) to evidence cozening by the Franciscans (xv. 23).

that the code method of communication was known in the sixteenth century.

In England "rapping" became associated with witchcraft. In one such case before the High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, in 1598, touching the alleged satanic possession of William Sommers (introduced above) four deponents testified that even when his hands and feet were held strange knocking persisted about his bed. Although he afterwards owned to simulation he may have been unduly influenced in which case his admission would be most unreliable.¹ In 1661 the house of Mr. John Mompesson of Tedworth, Wilts, became the scene of a series of annoyances such as thumping and drumming and senseless tricks of the poltergeist. In the presence of Sir Thomas Chamberlain of Oxfordshire, a gentleman opened up a parley by a system of knocks, when he learned that the operator was Satan set to work by one William Drury, a vagrant drummer, that is, be it noted, precisely the hypothesis forming in the minds of the interrogators.²

Mysterious rapping which, for the first time, aroused world-wide interest, occurred in John D. Fox's farmhouse at Hydesville, U.S.A., in 1847. While investigation failed to discover a material cause of the strange percussions code questions drew answers purporting to be dictated by the spirit of a murdered pedlar.³ The sensible responses certainly point to an intelligence at work and not necessarily to the producer of the sounds, and the system of communication has since become regular technique for carrying on conversation with "ethereal entities" having powers of seeing and hearing, but not speaking.

Homeopathic Magic. An ancient belief prevalent all over the world was that an enemy would suffer in a degree corresponding to the ill-treatment given to his small-scale representation modelled in wax, clay and other suitable material, particularly if, as by using hairs of the head, a part had been closely associated with the victim. These puppets or figurines are repeatedly mentioned in the witchcraft trials, but comment would be outside the scope of the present paper except for the experiments in France of Dr. Paul Joire and Colonel Eugène Rochas showing that certain substances, as wax, possess a high degree of receptivity to which nerve-force can be transmitted. On one occasion Joire shaped a figure in putty and having sensitised it, found upon pricking it that the subject felt pain in corresponding parts of the body.⁴ Remarkable achievements have been reported, but it seems that only with certain abnormal persons can this externalisation of sensibility take place apart from trance conditions, and some degree of contiguity is always present. It is also difficult to assess the share suggestion

¹W. & D. cited, 101, 182ff.

²Glanvill, *op. cit.*, p. 270ff; W. & D. cited, 338f.

³If the *Boston Journal* (23 Nov. 1904) is to be relied upon, and a skeleton and pedlar's tin box were discovered by the collapse of a false wall 56 years later, the way is cleared for important deductions.

⁴*Op. cit.*, 19.

may have played.¹ Exceptional combination of circumstances may have led to an occasional success with technique of this nature, and the spread of the belief in the efficacy of such homeopathic magic.

Influence at a distance. A conspicuous "wizard" of Worcestershire was John Lambe, a physician of Tardebigge, and many were the diverting tales told of his magic, but for want of documentary testimony few are now to be accepted as veridical. If we may believe the contemporary pamphleteer he had power of influencing the behaviour of persons at a distance, and in a playful moment when imprisoned in the Castle of Worcester, about 1608, and entertaining some jovial company as was often permitted in gaols of those days, he, for their indelicate amusement, caused a woman out walking "to lift her coats above her middle." Such a tale is not outside possibility, for execution of a mental command is illustrated in *Light* (1 Oct. 1921) where it is claimed that a psychic in London deliberately attempted and succeeded in causing a lady in Wincombe, thirty miles distant, to abandon her habitual game of bridge.²

Apports. In the production of objects supernormally (*i.e.* matter through matter) Dr. Lambe was the peer of any twentieth-century medium and more practical. Even in prison he could provide his guests instantly with any wine fancied, but the fact that a "boy in green" was seen to fetch the "sack" from a tavern half a mile distant rather minimises reliance on the occult character of the hospitality. In witchcraft process few of these magical or psychical movements have been specifically recorded, doubtless because looked upon as trivial and of less importance than the statutory crimes.

Witches' imps now come under suspicion of being psychic materialisations, but, wanting proof, they suggest innocent and playful pets, for in at least one contemporary examination the searchers ascertained that a hole had been made in the wall of the cottage for free movement.³ A remarkable zoological collection was attached to Elizabeth Clarke of Maningtree, in 1645, and consisted of cat, ferret, rabbit, toad and dogs, which, at night entered on call to eight watchers.⁴ Generally such an exhibition would be

¹Dr. J. Maxwell (*op. cit.*, p. 210), for example, records that a "sensitive" having taken off her cloak, he "pinched the lining" whereupon she claimed to have felt a sensation in "the part of the body which had been covered by the garment in the place pinched." Was this suggestion?

²Acts of this nature are given by Dr. Jung-Stilling, *Theory of Pneumatology*, transl. S. Jackson, 1834, p. 150; E. Gurney, *Phantasms of the Living*, 1886, i, 87f, and later works.

³*W. & D.* cited, 140f. It may be surmised that a prepared entrance would conserve psychic energy.

⁴*W. & D.* cited, 264ff. It is not impossible, of course, that Elizabeth was psychic and the animals materialised like the white cat and Maltese dog (left by Mrs. Guppy in Highbury) at 61 Lamb's Conduit Street, three miles away. Twelve persons being present, three were mediums, Mrs. Berry, Mrs. Guppy, and F. G. Herne (Edw. Ellis in *Medium and Daybreak*, 1871, ii, 185; C. Berry, *Experiences in Spiritualism*, 1876, p. 65).

liable through the fright caused and resulting malobservation to great exaggeration. For instance, at Southampton where one John Primmer deposed on 11 Feb. 1635-6 that Roger Keyes, incarcerated in the Bargate, caused to appear about midnight "five strange things in sundrye shapes, one like a bull, another in the forme of a white beare, and the other three like little puppie doggs without heads tumbling on the ground before him." Keyes spoke to these astonishing apparitions and "there was a greate light in the prison all that tyme."¹ Here is to be suspected ectoplasm rather than independent visitors.

In 1658, in a chain of events near Daventry, it is alleged that a girl, in about two weeks "vomited" 500 stones and coals some weighing quarter of a pound, and numerous poltergeist manifestations were observed. Little doubt that the sufferer was psychic and the stones "apports."² A witch went to gaol for the offence.³

In present-day psychic circles unexpected arrivals in enclosed spaces, such as flowers, birds, fishes, and even more perturbing objects like fire, have been reported and their production is not always the result of trickery. So long ago as the seventeenth century L. M. Sinistrari de Ameno explained some of the mysteries of demonology by the "pores" existing in all substances,⁴ and modern scientists have developed the notion.⁵ The porosity being accepted it does not seem incredible that one solid can push through a larger without damage to either, although the nature of the propelling and guiding force may remain a profound mystery. That some bumping is usual may be inferred from the fact that a solid driving through, for instance, a brick wall, does not proceed silently nor without engendering heat,⁶ two indications of friction. The most popular hypothesis, however, is that one or other of the contacting

¹*Southampton Record Society*, 1934, vol. 34, p. 22f. Cf. *Acts* xii, 7. On psychic lights, see below, p. 22.

²Cf. the stones which fell on Mary Longden at Youghal, 1661, but these often "vanished away" (Glanvill, *op. cit.*, 314).

³Glanvill, *op. cit.*, 366f. The facts were said to be well attested.

⁴*De Daemonialitate et Incubis et Succubis*, Paris, 104, per Lea, ii, 921.

⁵Some physicists regard the ether within matter as of varying density known as "bound ether", or "free ether," but the point of importance is expressed by Sir O. Lodge (*My Philosophy*, 1933, p. 191): "The atom is as porous as a solar system . . . the great bulk is . . . occupied only by a few electrons; so that it is by no means impenetrable to particles, which if they fly through it at sufficient speed, may escape being entangled and absorbed." Elsewhere (55) "if a point be thrown through an atom the chance of its hitting anything is about 1 in 10,000.

⁶This condition could scarcely have prevailed with the block of ice which Mrs. Samuel Guppy produced before the Florence Spiritual Society (*Report London Dialectical Society*, 1871, p. 371). In the Walton of Portsmouth, New England, case, 1682, stones flying about a closed room were "as hot as if they came out of the fire" (Increase Mather, *Essay*, 1684; Burr, 35). Major C. C. Colley notices that a long-lost ring which dropped on to a table was almost too hot to hold (*Psychic Science*, 25 Jan. 1925).

bodies disintegrates for the passing and immediately thereafter reintegrates.¹

Poltergeist. In witchcraft process is occasionally found a reference to weird antics of inanimate objects, formerly reckoned as the acts of devils controlled by mortals, but now commonly ascribed to the mischief of the poltergeists or kobolds acting on their own initiative, and more scientifically classed as telekinesis.* In the long series of remarkable but unintelligent manifestations of this nature victims suffer being teased, beaten, scratched, slapped, pricked, bitten, pinched, pelted with stones and household articles, knocked down, or even half-throttled and thrown into the fire by the invisible energies. Property may be smashed or houses burnt.* It is not surprising that during the era of witch persecution innocent women received the blame. A few illustrations may be given.

At Thrapston (Northants) in 1612 washing hanging out to dry being found soiled by pictures of toads and other ugly creatures the wanton spoiling and other mischiefs were charged to Helen Jenkenson, who, being found guilty, was hanged on Abington gallows.⁴

In the house of Mr. John Mompesson noticed above, 1661-3, every loose thing moved and people in bed found themselves lifted up. One night ashes having been strewn over the floor, the following morning impressions of "claws" were found.⁵ Responsibility

¹In favour of disintegration Prof. E. Bozzano (*Luce e Ombra*, Aug.-Oct. 1927) records the production of a small block of pyrites after travelling about a mile, but in powder form, the "spirit-operator" excusing himself from reintegrating as he had not enough power (*E.P.S.* 12). Prof. J. C. F. Zöllner (*Transcendental Physics*, transl. Massey, 1881, p. 85) explains that four-dimensional space renders separation and reunion of molecules unnecessary.

²The movement of objects without the visible application of any force known to science (*Encycl. Br.*).

³One house at Ringcroft, Galloway, was set on fire seven times on 27 April 1696. This persistent attack, lasting for three months, was attested by five ministers, two lairds and others. It is remarkable that no one was charged with witchcraft. Other cases in *Bulletin I, International Institute for Psychical Research*.

⁴W. & D. 208. Three centuries later in the same parish a mysterious explosion was followed by a basketful of clothes flying upwards never to return (*Daily Express*, 12 June, 1919). Cf. a case at Bishop Wearmouth, 1839, where "astronomical designs appeared on a ceiling" (Dr. W. R. Clanny, F.R.S., *A Faithful Record of the Miraculous Case of Mary Jobson*, 1841).

⁵The incident is not necessarily wholly fanciful. In the Chinese mourning ceremony lime is placed round the fireplace so that a spirit's presence may be indicated by the feet of a goose (*Encycl. Religion and Ethics*, iii, 752). The Talmud says: "Whoever wishes to know (of demons) let him take sifted ashes and strew them round his bed and in the morning their traces will be seen as of the footprints of a cock" (*Berakhoth*, 6a, per *Encycl. R. & E.*, iv, 614). A parallel is reported in the *Daily Mail*, 13 May 1901, where it is said that "uncanny happenings" led to powdered chalk being spread on the floor in which, after doors had opened mysteriously, there were found footprints of a bird about the size of a turkey (*Westminster Gazette*, 16 May 1901, per A. Hude, *Evidence for Communication*, 1913,

attached to a vagrant drummer, who was charged with witchcraft, but the unwitting cause and source of the dynamic energy may have been one of the young girls in the troubled household,¹ although a possibility not to be disregarded is that some telekinetic phenomena are spontaneous, that is to say, their genesis cannot be assigned to the subconscious or conscious mind or other function of any human being. In 1679-80 William Morse of Newbury in New England, with his wife and grandson, suffered much annoyance of the same uncontrollable nature, and many stones and household articles were seen flying about and an inkhorn dropped out of the air. Goodwife Morse, brought to trial for witchcraft, was sentenced to death, but reprieved. Acts of a "poltergeist" ascribed to an accused witch, Joan Butts, were the subject of sworn testimony before Sir Francis Pemberton, L.C.J., at Southwark Assizes in 1682. Stones were flung at the house in Ewell from every side, "but not one quarrel of glass was broken." Unaccountably furniture moved without mortal aid, an andiron flew over the heads of the amazed watchers, and a piece of clay stuck full of thorns was taken from the maid's back. Since stone-throwing is one of the commonest and best attested forms of telekinesis it is a remarkable exception that, while a domestic servant testified to seeing the missiles, she admitted that no one else could.²

Sir George Beaumont, foreman of a grand jury, at Leicester Summer Assizes, 1717, preserved some notes of the evidence of a trial, establishing that witch charms having been prepared were "stolen invisibly out of the pot," which, carried by an unseen force, "was seen to fly of its own accord with a great violence from a shelf in the house against a cow in the yard and dashed into a thousand pieces."³

Proceedings in the Star Chamber, 1606, evidenced a mild form of abnormal disrobing when "bewitched" Anne Gunter's petticoat and other garments were seen by responsible watchers to remove and replace themselves without mortal aid.⁴ A more obstinate attack is noted by Increase Mather in the Morse case (above) where a young girl, also presumed to be bewitched, had her clothes

p. 90). In the presence of the German medium, Frau Vollhardt, an impression resembling that of a chicken's foot was obtained in farina (*E.P.S.* 402). But cf. the tridactylous impression of a "psychic rod" in rice obtained at the Goligher Circle by E. E. Fournier d'Albe, 27 June 1921 (*op. cit.* 30).

¹W. & D. 338-9.

²Increase Mather cited; Burr, p. 23ff.

³W. & D. cited, 363. The incident at Fulda (above 14) also included stone-hurling. In a comparatively recent case in London it is said that forty policemen watched a house being bombarded, but could not see the thrower (*Daily Mail*, 19 Aug. 1920).

⁴W.H., 315. Cf. a later case where in an amazing series of incidents, two eggs flew from a shelf and one crossing the kitchen smashed against the head of a cat. (*An Authentic . . . Narrative of the Astonishing Transactions at Stockwell, Surrey*, January 1772, Reprint by H. Price, *Poltergeist over England*, 1945, pp. 146-153).

⁵W.S.C., 35f.

roughly pulled off by an unseen entity notwithstanding that bystanders tried to keep them in place. In later days Dr. J. Kerner reported seeing boots mysteriously removed from the feet of his patient Frau Hauße.¹ To be forcibly bereft of apparel was the discomfiting experience which befell the London psychic, Florence Cook, at séances of the Dalston Association about 1871.²

An example of a heavy movement by invisible force is announced from Malmesbury, Wilts, about 1658, where, in the house of Hugh Bartholomew, brewer, after a threat from a witch, a great money chest "was lifted up and let fall so that it shook the whole house" and the company "heard great cracks and jingling of money." The lock was seriously damaged and some of the coins bent. The suspected witch was hanged at Salisbury.³ Equally alarming and mysterious crashes occur in these days in both haunted houses and séance-rooms, for instance, Manuel Eyre, a witness before the London Dialectical Society in 1869, testified that in Buffalo, U.S.A., he saw a piano raised off the floor coming down with great force, while being played by invisible means.⁴

Levitation. Since it is established by ample evidence that heavy weights have been raised against gravity by the externalised and invisible powers of the psychic it is reasonable to admit that persons can also be lifted or the psychic raise himself, but the fabulous has to be discounted. Every one has heard of the flight of the prophet Habakkuk from his place in Jewry to Babylon and back, an "angel supporting him by the hair of the head."⁵ Readers may like to compare the fate of Dr. Eugenio Torralba, who, two milleniums later, claimed that, being attended by a prophetic spirit named Zequiël, aerial transport carried him from Valladolid to Rome and back in one day. The story being accepted seriously, about 1529 the venturesome aeronautical doctor made the acquaintance of the Grand Inquisitor, when he was lucky to be allowed to abjure heresy and magic and dismiss his "familiar."⁶

In the old days saints were said to levitate themselves, and witches their victims, but rarely themselves without aid of the devil. The instances alleged to be acts of witches are for want of preservation of documents of little evidential force.⁷ For example, although nine persons testified to the youth Richard Jones of Shepton Mallet, 1658, hanging to a beam by the flat of his hands, only one witness saw him "pass in the air over the garden wall"

¹*Die Seherin von Prevorst*, cited, 263.

²Several other cases have been communicated. *E.P.S.* 61.

³*W. & D.* cited, 334f.

⁴*Report*, 1871, p. 179. Florence Marryat being in the home of the Cooks, a well-known psychic family, a piano sailed over the heads of the sitters and fell with a crash (*There is no Death*, n.d. 154f.)

⁵*The Idol Bel*, 33ff.

⁶Printed by Pellicer, editor of Cervantes, per M. Summers, *Geography*, 600ff.

⁷See *W. & D.* cited, 84, 91f, for the cases.

for thirty yards before falling.¹ Jane Brooks, the witch held responsible was condemned and executed at Chard as mentioned (above p. 11). About 1663 Julian Cox was said to have been seen flying into her own chamber-window, but one person only testified.² At Cork Assizes, 11 September 1660, two witnesses spoke of Mary Longdon, a maid-servant of Youghal (for whose bewitchment Florence Newton was arraigned), during fits being removed strangely from her bed, on one occasion being conveyed to the solar beams at the top of the house only to be extracted by means of ladders.³

Turning to America, an Irishwoman, Goodwife Glover, having been executed at Boston, New England, 1688, after confessing to bewitching the children of John Goodwin, mason, her victims continued to suffer, and it is averred by the Rev. Cotton Mather⁴ that they could "fly like geese, with an incredible swiftness, having their toes only occasionally upon the ground, and their arms waving like the wings of a bird."⁵ Neighbours testified to seeing one child soar twenty feet across a room. Mather himself says that Martha Goodwin kept herself from the ground so long as to exceed the ordinary power of nature.⁶

Lord Chief Justice Holt, at the Exeter Summer Assizes, 1696, was disinclined to believe the sworn, but uncorroborated testimony of Elizabeth Bovet, that her child Sarah "walked up a wall nine feet high four or five times backwards and forwards her face and fore part of her body parallel to the ceiling of the room."⁷ Accusations of witchcraft dropping out of fashion these supernormal antics have become the prerogative of séance mediums, who nowadays levitate both themselves and their "sitters."⁸ The best authenticated exponent, D. D. Home, noticed above, on over a hundred occasions in good light, was seen to float and move in the air and even to write on the ceiling. A remarkable personal record by the distinguished Italian, Prof. E. Bozzano, maintains that the Marquis Carlo Centurione Scotto, on 29 July 1928, at Millesimo Castle, Italy, vanished from among his friends in a locked room and passing through several walls, brought up unhurt in a barn to be

¹Glanvill, *op. cit.*, 288. This effort may be compared with a flight of D. D. Home at Adare Manor, where he was "carried nearly thirty yards in the air, at a height of from three to four feet above the ground."

²Glanvill, *op. cit.*, 327.

³*Ibid.*, 318.

⁴*Memorable Providences*, 1689, sect. xiii; Burr, 108.

⁵No evidence is cited. The statement may be compared with that of A. David-Neel (*With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet*, 1931, p. 215) - certain initiates "as a result of long years of practice" can, in a state of trance, "glide on the air with an extreme celerity their feet no longer touching the ground."

⁶Sect. xix; Burr 110. Robert Calef (*More Wonders*, 1700) records the levitation of Margaret Rule (Burr 337f.).

⁷W. & D. cited, 378. See also 84, 91f, 174, 243, 395.

⁸Joire, *op. cit.*, 441f.

discovered several hours later.¹ Even this prodigy is as nothing compared with the alleged three-mile flight of Mrs. Samuel Guppy in a state of undress from her home in Highbury to an evening séance (3 June 1871) at 61 Lamb's Conduit Street, the mediums there being Francis G. Herne and Charles Williams (of checkered career) and the witnesses at points of departure and arrival, all told, being in number fourteen.²

Luminous Phenomena. Unaccountable lighting in the presence of religious ecstasies and psychic persons in twilight or darkness being not uncommon, it is worthy of recall that in the witchcraft trials it is heard of also. It has been noticed in Southampton prison 1636 (above, p. 17). In Tedworth House, 1662, "blue and glimmering lights" were seen and strange heat was felt.³ In 1653 John Mill of Edlingham Castle swore on oath that when he saw an apparition of a witch "at his bed foot a light appeared."⁴ So also William Stacy testified at Salem in 1692, that seeing a shape in the night, the room became as clear as day.⁵ And again, it is recorded that when the adjudged witches, Bishop and Parker, visited one Whetford they illuminated the room at their entry.⁶ Numerous other instances, ancient and modern, can be found in standard works.

Cold winds. During the mystical rites over which Anne Bodenham of Fisherton Anger (near Salisbury) presided in 1653 a "strong wind blew," according to a servant-maid, who attended repeatedly.⁷ The old crystal-gazer, said to have been employed by Dr. Lambe (above p. 16) would, in our days, have been a successful medium. Born several centuries too soon, at the age of eighty she climbed the ladder at Salisbury for witchcraft. Strange breezes and also thermal variations have been known to séance frequenters from time immemorial. In the New Testament we read of "the rushing of a mighty wind."⁸ Swedenborg in 1748, citing *John*, iii, 8, wrote: "Spirits have come to me, both now and very frequently before, with wind, which I felt in the face; yea, it also moved the flame of the candle, and likewise papers; the wind was cold . . ."⁹ Mrs. C. L. Tweedale, a witness of many apparitions, on one occasion was

¹*Luce e Ombra*, Sept.-Oct. 1928, per G. K. Hack, *Modern Psychic Mysteries*, n.d., 270ff. The phenomena have been adversely criticised (*Journal S.P.R.* followed by *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 Mar. 1930).

²*Echo*, 8 June 1871. *Spiritualist*, 15 June 1871, per *Light*, May 1946. H. Price, psychical researcher, in *Poltergeist over England*, 1945, p. 249, writes: "Of course the whole thing was a swindle," but he said the same of the Fox rappings, in neither case supplying evidence or argument establishing imposture.

³Glanvill, *op. cit.*, 274, 276. ⁴*W. & D.* cited, 323.

⁵Cotton Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, 1693. Reprint 1862, p. 136.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 165. ⁷*W. & D.* cited, 324.

⁸*Acts*, ii, 2, R.V.

⁹*Spiritual Diary* cited, 479, also see 406, and 2392.

awakened by a "strong cold breeze" and, on another, reported "a loud rushing sound like a great wind."¹ Scientists including Sir William Crookes and Prof. Enrico Morselli of Genoa University have registered such abnormal air currents and falls in temperature² the loss of heat being presumably equalised by increase of energy for the manifestations (Joule).

Odours and Flames. A pamphleteer has recorded that a "horrible stink" and "fiery flames" were experienced by six witnesses in the hall of the house of Stephen Cooper of Ditcheat, 1584, when his raving wife was carried out by a "devil."³ In the Tedworth disturbance a "sulphurous smell" and a "bloomy noisome" one became perceptible.⁴ Generally at modern séances pleasant scents are the order, but cases have been reported where "spirits" emitted an unbearable stench.⁵ It is of interest to compare the happenings at Ditcheat with an incident at Weston in 1908, when the disappearance of an apparition at the empty kitchen-grate was accompanied by an uprush of flame reaching higher than the mantelpiece, and by a cloud of smoke.⁶

Materialisation of "Spirits." The most astonishing act of the séance-room is the formation of shapes supposed to represent deceased persons and to be occupied by their etheric spirits from another plane. These very extraordinary simulacra are now regarded as being moulded from ectoplasm exuded by the medium and sitters as adumbrated above (p. 7f). A possible reference to such extrusion in the sixth century has been mentioned (p. 7), but the earliest formal testimony of what spiritualists would regard as a partially materialised entity was recorded at Stradbroke, Suff. in 1599, and vouched for by the vicar, chief constable of Hoxne, and several "gentlemen of credit." The story is that Joan Jorden, a maidservant, having had some visits from toads and a spirit-cat believed to be sent by Olive Barthram, a witch (afterwards condemned by the Lord Chief Justice and executed at Bury St. Edmunds 12 July 1599), suffered a mysterious ailment, a prominent symptom being the trance. At eleven o'clock one night (evidently being watched by the above gentlemen) she lay unable to move or speak being it is said restrained by the "spirit" which lay on her breast.⁷ The unwanted visitor, who had first announced his presence by

¹C. L. Tweedale, *op. cit.*, 237, 398.

²At the "Margery" séances, a drop in the mercury from 70 to 42 degrees F. was noticed (J. M. Bird, *Margery the Medium*, 190). A fall of 20 degrees was registered (H. Price, *Stella C.*, 35).

³W. & D. cited, 164f. ⁴Glanvill, *op. cit.*, 272, 275.

⁵F. Marryat, *op. cit.*, 111, records the case of a spirit "Lenore" whose odour resembled that of a putrid corpse. A Swedenborgian notion suggested by *Isaiah*, iii, 24 (*Spiritual Diary*, cited, 323, 1279).

⁶C. L. Tweedale, *op. cit.*, 406.

⁷For a modern case of a heap of white material lying on the medium's breast, see *Phenomena of Materialisation*, cited, 129. Also the flashlight photographs of plasma issuing from the medium's chest, taken by Dr. W. J. Crawford, *The Psychic Structures*, 1921. Figs T, U, at end of book.

“scraping on the walls, knocking (raps?), shuffling¹ in the rushes, and kissing the maid, is described as a “thick dark substance about a foot high, like to a sugar loaf, white on the top. Being charged he *shot up* as high again.² He had an audible voice, quite distinct from that of the maid, both speaking at once.”³ After giving his name as Giles (Red Indians not being fashionable in those days!) and a few particulars of himself, he vanished⁴.

No full forms⁵ manifested, but partial materialisation restricted to hands, noticed in the Scriptures and so often visualised in the séance room, occurs in the evidence led in two early witchcraft trials.⁶

MENTAL MANIFESTATIONS

Split or Multiple Personality. Dr. Morton Prince, the Boston, U.S.A., authority on abnormal psychology, touching the supposed possession by devils which kept the witch persecutors busy, has expressed the following opinion.

In unstable natures the mind may be disintegrated in such a way as to produce a doubling or rather a multiplication of consciousness and to form two, three, or more groups of subconscious states, which at times are capable of considerable independent activity. At times when excited they are capable of being stirred into fury . . . in crises of a pathological character. Such were the so-called “demoniac possessions” of the middle ages, and such are the hysterical crises of modern medicine (*The Dissociation of a Personality*, 1925, p. 18).

In an instance at Herringswell, Suffolk, in 1573, it is recorded that the “Foul Fiend” occupying Alexander Nyndge, and being prevailed upon to converse, in a “base hollow voice,” declared himself to be an Irishman called Aubon. Before eighteen persons the exorcism proved successful.⁷ Sometimes the energumen has more than one unwanted voice. For example, Thomas Darling, an hysterical youth of Burton-on-Trent, who suffered from ague and other disorders, and deposed at Derby Assizes, 1596, that he

¹Cf. the shuffling, tearing, pulling, rapping, and scraping, with the ejection of plasma, in Experiment “K” observed by Crawford, *op. cit.*, 109.

²This description may be compared with the materialisation at a Brighton séance, 12 June 1875, the mediums being Mrs. A. Guppy and Mrs. C. Berry. Something white appeared over the chair, rising to about fifteen inches above the table and looking like a column of cotton wool. Gradually it seemed to unfold, and a dark shade about the size of a man’s hand appeared on it. A further process of development revealed the semblance of a face, and the figure suddenly *shot up* to the height of five feet . . . It then sank down to its former dimensions.” Finally, a speaking figure of an Egyptian formed (W. Gill in *Brighton Examiner* per C. Berry, *op. cit.*, 183ff).

³The American medium Valiantine in England spoke at the same moment as the direct voice. Certified by H. D. Bradley, *Towards the Stars*, 1894, p. 179.

⁴W. & D. cited, 187ff.

⁵Such as “Katie King” reported and photographed repeatedly by W. Crookes, F.R.S., in 1872-4.

⁶W. Morse of Newbury, 1679, and G. Walton of Portsmouth, 1682 (Burr, 30, 36).

⁷W. & D. cited, 108.

entered heaven and embraced the apostles, had two additional voices confessedly of brother devils, Glassap and Radulphus, owning Beelzebub as master.¹

Inspirational speakers were found among the fancied victims of witchcraft, as they are today amongst psychics. In the sixteenth century a wench to make a stir with her addresses was Elizabeth Barton of Aldington (called the "Maid of Kent"), who expatiated on godly matters. Imposture being "proved" she and her clerical abettors were executed.² The following century, Margaret Muschamp, a child of Spittal, Northumberland, deemed to be bewitched, had visions of angels and gave "heavenly discourses on religious subjects." Both were hysterics, so often precocious.³ Trance utterances, which may issue in daylight from such "demoniacs," and also modern psychics, have created a wide interest for many a century. If a medium be gagged or uses his normal voice while the speeches continue, such pronouncements in séance-room parlance are termed "direct or independent voice" and are considered to be those of visiting spirits, who have succeeded in temporarily materialising vocal organs and lungs.⁴

Mysterious "voices" may be for the "ear" of the psychic or clairaudient alone. An instance known to everyone is that of Jeanne d'Arc, who claimed to hear the words of God and to seeing saints. As with other sensitives from the earliest times these apparitions accorded with contemplations and beliefs and so she named her saintly guides, Michael, Catherine and Margaret, actually mythical personages. Her ecclesiastical accusers, with no more reason, identified them as Satan, Belial, and Behemoth. Charged with twelve articles of heresy and in two described as an invocatress of demons, the tragedy ended with the stake in 1431. A well-vouched case of the nineteenth century was that of Mary Jobson of Bishop Wearmouth. Probably suffering from hystero-epilepsy she became blind, deaf and dumb. Nevertheless she distinguished inner voices as being those of the Virgin Mary, apostles, and martyrs, whilst her attendants enjoyed exquisite music from an unknown source. In May 1840 she successfully foretold the attack on Queen Victoria (10 June).⁵ Later mediums, less favoured, obtain messages only from disembodied spirits of inferior notoriety of whom they claim visions.

¹*Ibid.*, 176ff. A conversation of this nature has been preserved in a manuscript of the year 1626 (Add. MS. 36674, f.189). A printed version is in Wright's *Narratives*, ii, 139ff. The two demons give the witches away leading to their apprehension.

²W. & D. cited, 112f.

³W. & D. cited, 317f.

⁴Explanations of these phenomena differ greatly. While Prof. J. H. Hyslop (*Life after Death*, 305), a well-known American investigator, plumps for demoniac or spirit obsession the materialist can see no further than manifestations of the psychic's so-called "subconscious mind," even if drawing from external sources, and his argument that the split-up parts of the dissociated mind can be re-united by hypnosis is countered by Hyslop's view that the victim has been dispossessed, as anciently thought.

⁵Dr. W. R. Clanny, *op. cit.*

Automatisms. Involuntary movements without any traceable external stimulus, but popularly concluded to be due to demonic action, are of remote antiquity. In the reign of Flavius Valens (364-78) the bowl-pendulum form of "ouija" supported by purifications and invocations, was used for predicting the next emperor. According to the contemporary historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, a number of the operating theurgists and others quite innocent of curiosity were put to death¹ It is known from modern experiments that a weight suspended by a silk thread, even when effectively screened, can be actuated by a medium.²

Of visible actions, writing, now so common, is rare in English witchcraft trials because few people then studied penmanship, and "spirits" rarely exhibit any ability in advance of ordinary mortals. In 1650, Margaret Muschamp, the supposed demoniac already noticed, during one trance, wrote on a paper "Jo: Hu: and Do: Swo:" leading to suspicion of John Hutton (who afterwards died in prison) and Dorothy Swinow, who remained at large notwithstanding efforts to have her committed.³

Projection of the Double. As it is known that what appears to be a visible double or astral body of some living persons is projected to a distance there may be some truth in the evidence of Margaret Armiger before Sir John Holt, L.C.J., at Exeter in 1696, that she met Bett Horner, an accused witch, in the country, at a distance of about twenty feet, at a time when actually the latter was lodged in prison.⁴

Telepathy and Clairvoyance. In trance condition, whether spontaneous, induced, or the result of malady, the subject may become telepathic or clairvoyant or able otherwise to apprehend things of which in his normal state he has no knowledge (cryptaesthesia). That clairvoyants were liable to be treated as witches appears in the Nantes case noticed above (p. 6). Super-sensory cognition has been also reported of the hystero-epileptics presumed to be victims of witchcraft, but the evidence preserved is not strong. William Sommers (according to two deponents before the High Sheriff of Notts. 1597) told of divers occurrences normally unknown to him, and is said to have detected a murderer.⁵ Joan Harvey of Hockham, Norf. (1600), Helen Fairfax of Fewstone, Yorks. (1621), Margaret Muschamp of Spittle (1650), Richard Jones of Shepton Mallet (1658), and others are credited in witchcraft annals with disclosing in their fits far distant events.⁶ Anne Gunter of North Moreton is said to have read writing contained in folded papers.⁷ This is not improbable for Dr. A. N. Chowrin,

¹Transl. by C. D. Yonge, 1894, p. 510ff.

²H. Price, *Fifty Years of Psychological Research*, 1939, p. 77f.

³W. & D. cited, 318.

⁴*Ibid.*, 378. Numerous instances have been published, e.g. Edmund Gurney, *op. cit.*, ii, 78ff.

⁵W. & D. cited, 101, 182ff. C. L. Tweedale (*op. cit.*, 445) notices murderers discovered by psychics.

⁶W. & D. cited, 97.

⁷W.S.C., 31.

director of the lunatic asylum at Tamboff, Russia, discovered that certain patients suffering from hystero-epilepsy could read hermetically-sealed letters.¹ Of witches specially mentioned as knowing everyone's business were Mother Dutton of Clewer, 1580, Joan Pechey of St. Osyth, 1582, and Anne Bodenham of Salisbury, 1683.²

Dr. Lambe (above p. 16) was not only clairvoyant and could recover goods lost, but also predicted the future. Having told the Lady Fairfax that "within a few days her heart would ache by occasion and accident of water," three days later her brothers were drowned.³ In general, he was more outspoken than the present-day medium and not so popular ending his career by being battered to death by a mob. The published records of modern hypnotic practitioners and psychic investigators are replete with similar successes in clairvoyance and prevision of future events, but from the days of the Israelite prophets failures are usual with major events.⁴

Treatment of Disease. Among the accomplishments of the talented magician Dr. Lambe is also said to have been the ability to diagnose disease without even seeing the patient.⁵ Not all the suspected witches practised black magic. Some undoubtedly were public benefactors, being popularly regarded as white, and so corresponding to the spirit-healer of the present day. In 1570 the enterprising keeper of the gaol in Canterbury Castle, on his own initiative, released a convicted witch, justifying himself by his opinion that she "did more good by her physic than the preachers of God's word."⁶ A statement sworn at Crewkerne in 1606 avers that the "questionable" witch, Joan Guppy, after "taking away sickness from another and laying it upon herself" quickly freed herself by "laying it upon some beast, fowl, or worm,"⁷ a practice of ancient Teutons and primitives of Asia and Africa. When the Earl of Derby, supposed to be bewitched, was dying in 1594, a woman present eased him of his vomiting and hiccough by taking the trouble on herself.⁸ In 1652, the suspected witch, Margaret Stothard of Edlingham, Northumberland was believed to have taken the "distemper off a child and laid it upon a calf," which went mad.⁹ That some such curative technique may have been practised seems probable since psychic healers of the present day

¹C. Richet, *op. cit.*, 188.

²For particulars see *W. & D.* cited.

³*Ibid.*, 203.

⁴For instance, the press during 1938 reported that prominent mediums were convinced that Britain would not be involved in war for many years. Spirits were three years too soon in telling Swedenborg that peace had been declared (*Spiritual Diary* cited, 5994).

⁵*W. & D.* cited, 203. Dr. J. A. Gridley of Southampton, Mass. in *Astounding Facts from the Spirit World*, 1854, claimed similar powers. (*E.P.S.*, 167).

⁶*W.H.*, 37.

⁷*W.S.C.* 26.

⁸Thos. Pennant, 1801, p. 28ff. *W. & D.* cited, 175.

⁹*Ibid.*, 323.

are said "often to assume temporarily the bodily conditions of the afflicted man and vividly experiences his ailments."¹ Dr. Eugène Osty records that his metagnomic subjects, who obtain cognitions of the state of sick persons by objectification of mental images, endured the pain which, while not corresponding to the actual sensations of the patient, at least led to diagnosis of his trouble.² In some such way the idea of transfer of disease may have arisen.

Strange tongues. Witches, unlike the modern psychic, seldom figure as linguists. About 1647 a young woman testified that being invited to the house of the wife of Lendall of Cambridge (afterwards hanged for witchcraft on Jesus Green), for a meeting presided over "by one in black," the conversation was in a language unrecognised by her.³ Dr. Drage of Hitchin, who published a *Treatise of Diseases from Witchcraft*, regarded as a sign of possession the speaking of languages unknown to the victim.⁴ This not uncommon phenomenon is experienced with fever patients and entranced mediums. In the presence of George Valiantine of New York, direct voices have carried on long conversations in numerous languages including archaic Chinese, taken down by a philologist,⁵ surely rather more suggestive of mind-reading than glossolalia.⁶

Conclusions. Few as the extracts are it is believed that they sufficiently identify items that formerly were classed as witchcraft with the later manifestations of spiritism as trance and the associated physical and mental phenomena.

Such a familiar abnormality as water-divining has here been passed over. In the old days its practice certainly influenced the superstitious portion of the public to suspect dealings with Satan, and charges as well as those of communing with spirits and less impressive demonstrations were often dealt with by minor courts.⁷

¹*E.P.S.*, 167. Bessie Williams, clairvoyant (noticed above), who practised medical diagnosis, took upon herself and retained symptoms of the diseases so much so that her health failed causing abandonment of her profession (*E.P.S.* 405).

²*Supernormal Faculties in Man*, transl. De Brath, 1923, p. 153f.

³H. More, *An Antidote against Atheisme*, 1653, p. 129; *W. & D.* cited, 314.

⁴*Ibid.*, 135.

⁵D. Bradley, *Towards the Stars*, 1924; *Wisdom of the Gods*, 1925; Dr. N. Whymant, *Psychic Adventures in New York*, 1931.

⁶Bradley (*Wisdom*, 221) reported two Chinese dialects mixed in the presence of a Chinese lady familiar with them. Prof. E. Bozzano, *Animism and Spiritism*, transl. De Brath, n.d., p. 151, claims eleven cases in which deceased personalities speak or write in tongues unfamiliar to either medium or sitters.

⁷*W.H.*, 9ff; *W. & D.* 33ff. Occasionally the psychic evidence of bygone days as preserved to us was sworn in the higher courts of law. It is interesting to compare with recent proceedings before a L.C.J. in the Court of Appeal (*Rex v. Duncan*) the treatment of John Crok arraigned before Sir John Knivet, L.C.J. in the King's Bench (Crown side) in 1371. Accused, upon swearing that he had used a saracen's head and done nothing against the faith of Holy Church, obtained his enlargement (K.B. 27, 443, m. Rex 23). Even in Elizabeth's reign (1561) one Cox, a priest, also in the Queen's Bench for conjuration of spirits, was discharged on taking an oath of abjuration (K.B. 29, 194, m. 52).

and are largely lost to us. The civil and ecclesiastical records introducing psychic phenomena now possible to cite relate to a very small proportion of the witchcraft proceedings and are many fewer than might have been expected. Having regard to the backwardness of physical science it would not have been surprising to find occult manifestations repeatedly taken to be supernatural, and exerting a great influence in supporting suspicions and accusations, but it has to be concluded that factual supersensory phenomena, having aroused suspicion, were largely disregarded in official circles probably through being overshadowed by the supposed and, although wholly imaginary, more awesome supernatural doctrines maintained by the Church. If, as often observed, an hereditary tendency to active psychic powers exists, as is recognised with mental and physical abilities and disabilities, the tremendous slaughter of young "witches" will explain in considerable measure why "physical mediums" are scarce at the present day. The decision as to whether any particular phenomenon observed was actually biological or spiritistic or nothing more than hallucinatory is outside the scope of this paper and must be left to the judgment of the reader.

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